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SUPERINTENDENT LUNA CALLS FOR 6.9 PERCENT INCREASE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOISE – Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna submitted a budget proposal Tuesday requesting a 6.9 percent increase in state funding for Idaho public schools for the 2015–16 school year.

“We’re meeting our priorities and fulfilling our promises with this budget,” said Superintendent Luna. “This budget proposal follows priorities set forth by Governor Otter’s Taskforce for Improving Education. We know the most important factor in a child’s education is the quality of the teacher. This budget focuses on improving teacher pay and providing better support for teachers through targeted professional development and access to 21st century learning tools.”

State agencies are required to submit budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal year to the Governor’s office by September 1. Because of the Labor Day holiday, agencies were allowed to submit a day later.

The public schools general fund request equals \$1,460,700,900, a 6.9 percent increase over fiscal year 2015. Without automatic increases for growth in student population and educators, the budget is a 5.8 percent increase.

The largest increases in the budget are focused on recommendations from the Governor’s Taskforce for Improving Education to fund a career ladder for teachers, which changes the way teachers are compensated as well as increases in professional development dollars sent to districts and transitioning from a one to one device pilot program to a formula sent directly to all school districts.

Highlights in Superintendent Luna’s budget proposal for the 2015 school year include:

- More than \$23 million for the career ladder
- An increase in discretionary funding of \$10 million
- \$9 million additional for 21st century classroom technology to create one to one mobile device environments
- \$21.6 million for professional development funding for teachers
- More than \$10 million to restore funds for maintenance and safe and drug free schools

This budget request will now go to the Governor’s office for consideration. According to state statute, the Governor presents a budget recommendation for all of state government to members of the Idaho Legislature in January. Fiscal year 2016 begins July 1, 2015.

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